

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2004

Dr. Julie L. Gerberding  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road, Northeast  
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Gerberding:

We write to you regarding an issue of great importance, not only to New Jersey, but also to the entire nation.

As you know, Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) has recently been reported as the suspected cause of a number of deaths around the Cherry Hill, New Jersey area. News accounts have indicated that this suspected "cluster" of vCJD, commonly known as Mad Cow disease, may account for at least 13 deaths in recent years.

As you are also aware, the investigations of a local New Jersey resident who lost a friend to a degenerative brain disease, diagnosed as classic CJD, have yielded an alarming result – all of the recent suspected CJD victims were associated with the now-closed Garden State Race Track in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Whether the victims were track employees or patrons, all were connected to the track in some way.

Given that the statistical occurrence of this rare disease is approximately one case per million, we believe that there is great need for a complete and timely investigation of this suspected cluster of vCJD. We understand that the CDC has been working closely with the State of New Jersey in a reassessment of these deaths. We commend these efforts, and ask that you keep the New Jersey delegation informed as this critical investigation progresses.

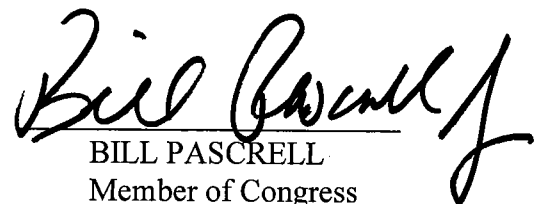
In addition, we request that the CDC increase its focus on interstate coordination. New Jersey has a long history of requiring reporting of CJD, however the allegations span across several neighboring states, which do not have reporting requirements. Therefore, we request the CDC's assistance in intensifying coordination between states.

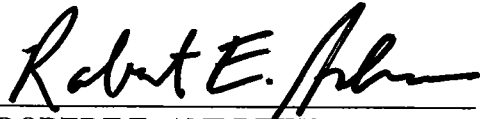
Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

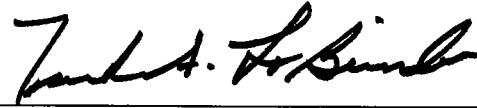
  
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FRANK A. LOBIONDO  
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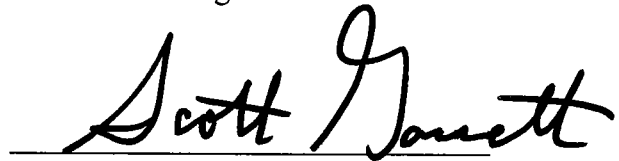
ROBERT MENEANDEZ  
Member of Congress



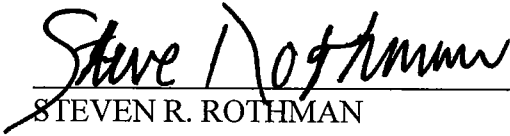
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